

Connecting to Books with Kidblog
Cowtown Children's and Young Adult Book Workshop
January 28th, 2011

What is Kidblog.org?

Kidblog.org is an easy way to start student blogs while still maintaining student privacy and safety. Registration requires email only for the main account, so teachers and students do not have to have email accounts. Another nice benefit is that you do not have to know HTML code to create blogs. If don't know a lot about HTML code vs. a visual editor it is basically the difference between creating with menu options that look a lot like Microsoft Word vs. having to know all the geeky code to bold text, change colors, etc.

Overview of the Process

Step 1: Find a teacher with which to partner. I would start with one teacher. Choose someone progressive and friendly. ☺ Once word spreads the teachers will seek you out to create their own blogs. I did a blog with one teacher and by the end of the month had the whole Language Arts department and a Spanish teacher.

Step 2: Get principal approval and district approval as required.

Step 3: Create an account on <http://kidblog.org> and familiarize yourself with kidblog navigation. See directions at the end of this handout. Our school has one master account under my email and every other kidblog account is an offshoot of that blog. The benefit of that is that I can help teachers approve posts if they would like, and it's easier for me to train students.

Step 4: Set up classes and student accounts

Step 5: Create a post with examples and directions for student posts

Step 6: Teach students about what a blog involves, discuss expectations, and cover Internet safety and school district policies on social networking. *My teacher did this in the classroom prior to coming to the library.*

Step 7: Give students user ids and passwords and show them how to get started

Step 8: Publicize your results and schedule a time for the second post. *Some of our teachers come to the library for this, but some use netbooks and do their on their own in the classroom.*

Contact Information

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Collaborative Suggestions

Reading

- Create book reviews
- Respond to book reviews
- Post digital book talks
- Post podcasts
- Class discussion on a specific genre
- Author research
- Creating read alike lists

Writing

- Students practice skills such as comma rules, etc. by writing a response in the form of a blog entry.
- Students find mistakes on a teacher's blog entry and revise a paragraph to make it better.
- Teacher starts a story (can be from an actual book, her own creation, or a photo) and then write a blog entry instead of a paper response.
- Students create a tagxedo or wordle that describe themselves and post
- Students create comic strip on a site like <http://makebeliefscomix.com> to illustrate grammar rules.
- Teacher posts a paragraph with lots of homophones used incorrectly. Students repost the corrections as a blog entry.
- Teacher posts a paragraph in third person and then students must translate to first person or vice versa.

Science

- Students create blog entries teaching a science concept
- Students upload video to showcase a science lesson or demonstration
- Research and share information about a famous scientist
- Answer questions posted by teacher
- Talk to an expert in the field being studied in science
- Look at pictures uploaded on a topic and respond

Social Studies

- Each student creates a blog entry about a famous historical figure
- Diary of the time periods as you study them as if you actually lived in that time period.
- Students discuss regions of Texas or the World through blogs
- Students interview a family member about a time in history and add supporting details from text.
- Locate information on a map or passage posted as a blog entry and use context clues to answer questions.


Foreign Languages

- Correspond with a foreign exchange student
- Write posts to classmates in another language
- Respond to teacher questions
- Post slide shows teaching vocabulary
- Create a comic strip on a site like <http://makebeliefscomix.com> and post



Making Class Pages in Kidblog.org

Go to the website: <http://kidblog.org/home.php> Note: website is an .org not .com website



Create Your Account

1.  Click to Create a Class
2. Complete the registration information
3. Click create class
Note: remember class name and your username are both visible by students and anyone on the Internet

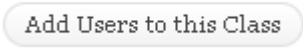
Personalize Your Account Settings

1. Click the tab  Note: If you are in the class view you may not to select  before you can see the settings tab.
2. Name Your Class (remember this is visible to both members and public)
3. Set Time Zone
4. Choose Theme
5. Set Privacy Settings for Posts (I chose posts/comments class members only and teacher must approve posts)
6. Control Comments (I chose class members only/teacher must approve)
7. Under Permissions (I checked all three boxes). Save all changes.

Create Classes

1. Click 
2. Click 
3. Create your classes. Be sure to label with period only-don't distinguish between honors/regulars/resource/tutoring/etc. due to FRPA. Note: this is visible to members and the public.


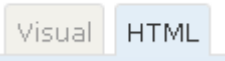

Add Students

1. Select the appropriate class
2. Click 
3. Do not use student names. Either use creative names (like character names, etc) or use let the program select names for you.
4. Another option for uploading students is a .csv file. Some attendance programs will let you do this automatically; ours would not so we did it manually.
 - Open Excel
 - First Column: student1, student2, etc
 - Second Column: student ID number
 - Click save as and name file (I use kidblog and the teachers name
 - Change the bottom box to .csv not .xls or .xlsx




- Then I go back to the document and type last names in the third column so that we can give each student their user ID and password.

Writing a New Post

1. Click 
2. Give it a title in the narrow box on the top
3. There are two few modes: 
 - a. Visual has editing tools much like Word
 - b. HTML is where you can type HTML code if you know code or where you can embed HTML code from another website like Animoto, Wix, Glogster, etc.
4. Type the text and use the editor to make changes.
5. You can add video, media, music, and images next to the 
6. Save as draft, preview, or publish (remember when working with students they will not have a publish button. Their button will say submit for review.



Using the Dashboard

1. Click 
2. Main page shows recent activity and can help you check the status of your pages.
3. Under Class Statistics you will see the following

1 Published Post	0 Comments
1 Pending Post	0 Waiting
0 Drafts	0 Approved
4. To approve a post click on pending post. As you hover over the post you can edit, approve, trash, or view. Once you've approved the option switches to unapprove incase you change your mind.
5. This will only view the class you are currently in. To show other classes choose view all classes or at the top of the screen use the drop down menu to toggle back and forth between different classes.

[View All Classes](#)

Reviewing the Blog

1. Click on one of the two buttons  
2. Use these buttons to review posts or student/teacher comments and approve posts
3. You may do this one by one, as selected, or as a bulk.
4. At the top of your screen you can toggle back and forth between classes
5. You can also do this in the dashboard feature above. Just use what works best for you.

Accessing the Blog with Students

1. Give them the direct web address ex: <http://kidblog.org/LibrarianPractice/>

2. Click  (top right)

3. Select their username from the drop down and enter password (You set up before and give this to them in advance or the day of. They should keep this in a secure location).



A login form with a 'Username' label above a dropdown menu showing 'Select Your Name' with a downward arrow. Below it is a 'Password' label above a text input field. At the bottom left is a link 'Enter Username Manually' and at the bottom right is a blue 'Log In' button.

4. Note: be sure to discuss Internet Safety with students before they begin this project. It is important they know what your expectations are and how it relates to the school's code of conduct.

Try it Out

Go to: <http://kidblog.org/LibrarianPractice/>

Use your User ID and Password to log in (provided during training)